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(54) Title: IDENTIFICATION OF BACTERIA (57) Abstract A method for identifying bacteria in a sample is described which comprises amplifying a portion of the 23S rDNA present in the sample using, as one primer, a degenerate primer set comprising one or more DNA molecules consisting essentially of DNA having the sequence(s) 5'GCGATTTTCYGAAYGGGGRAACCC, the other primer consisting of DNA having the sequence 5'TTCGCCTTTCCCTCACGGTACT and testing the resulting amplicon by hybridisation to one or more oligonucleotide probes designed to identify one or more bacteria likely to be present in the sample. The method allows for the identification of at least 8 and considerably more bacterial species in a single test, including <i>Escherichia coli</i> , <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> , <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> , <i>Enterococcus</i> spp., <i>Klebsiella</i> spp., <i>Enterobacter</i> spp., <i>Proteus</i> spp, <i>Pneumococci</i> , and coagulase negative <i>Staphylococci</i> . One or more novel oligonucleotides for use in this test are immobilised on a solid carrier and incorporated in a diagnostic test kit for use in hospitals and other environments.		